

REMARKS

Claims 14 to 35 are pending in the present application.

It is respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending claims are allowable, and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

With respect to paragraphs (9) and (10) of the Office Action, it asserts that the traversal of the Official Notice in the previous Office Action of September 9, 2009 was inadequate because it did not state why the noticed facts were not part of the common knowledge or well-known in the art. However, M.P.E.P. § 2144.03(A) states that Official Notice “should only be taken by the examiner where the facts asserted to be well-known, or to be common knowledge in the art are *capable of instant and unquestionable demonstration* as being well-known.” (emphasis added). Further, “[i]t is never appropriate to rely solely on ‘common knowledge’ in the art without evidentiary support in the record, as the principal evidence upon which a rejection was based.” *Id.* Thus, whenever Official Notice is taken, it is believed and respectfully submitted that the initial burden is on the Office to provide documentary evidence to support its assertions.

As to M.P.E.P. § 2144.03(C), under 37 C.F.R. § 1.111(b), an applicant is only required under the rules to reduce to writing a reply “which distinctly and specifically points out the supposed errors in the examiner's action.” Further, the Court of Customs and Patent Appeals has stated that “[i]n the absence of *anything in the record* to contradict the examiner's holding, and in the absence of *any demand by appellant for the examiner to produce authority* for his statement, we will not consider this contention.” *In re Chevenard*, 139 F.2d 711, 713, 60 USPQ 239, 241 (CCPA 1943) (emphasis added).

Thus, it is believed and respectfully submitted that the C.F.R. and the case law provide that to traverse Official Notice, an applicant is only required to distinctly point out the errors in the Official Notice by either stating on the record what contradicts the assertions or demanding that the examiner produce authority. In the present case, it has been specifically requested that the Examiner provide an affidavit and/or published information, thereby meeting this requirement.

While the asserted requirements may not be agreed with, it is respectfully submitted that the traversal of the Official Notice was sufficient since it has been stated on the record that the rejections supported by Office Notice are based on assertions that draw on facts

within the personal knowledge of the Examiner. In other words, it has been *specifically asserted* that the facts noticed are not part of the common knowledge *because* the facts were drawn from the Examiner's personal knowledge.

It is therefore respectfully submitted that any Official Notice previously taken has been adequately and timely traversed, so that contrary to the assertions in paragraphs (10) and (16) of the Office Action the noticed facts do *not* constitute admitted prior art. *Additionally, it is again requested that the Examiner provide a supporting affidavit or publication to support each factual assertion for which the Examiner has provided Official Notice.*

Claims 14 to 28, 31, 32, 34 and 35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over German Patent No. DE 10153484 (the "Gilge" reference) in view of Local Area Networks Architectures and Implementations (the "Martin" reference).

To reject a claim under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), the Office bears the initial burden of presenting a *prima facie* case of obviousness. *In re Rijckaert*, 9 F.3d 1531, 1532, 28 U.S.P.Q.2d 1955, 1956 (Fed. Cir. 1993). To establish *prima facie* obviousness, three criteria must be satisfied. First, there must be some suggestion or motivation to modify or combine reference teachings. *In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071, 5 U.S.P.Q.2d 1596 (Fed. Cir. 1988). This teaching or suggestion to make the claimed combination must be found in the prior art and not based on the application disclosure. *In re Vaeck*, 947 F.2d 488, 20 U.S.P.Q.2d 1438 (Fed. Cir. 1991).

Also, as clearly indicated by the Supreme Court in *KSR*, it is "important to identify a reason that would have prompted a person of ordinary skill in the relevant field to combine the [prior art] elements" in the manner claimed. *See KSR Int'l Co. v. Teleflex, Inc.*, 127 S. Ct. 1727 (2007). In this regard, the Supreme Court further noted that "rejections on obviousness cannot be sustained by mere conclusory statements; instead, there must be some articulated reasoning with some rational underpinning to support the legal conclusion of obviousness." *Id.*, at 1396. Second, there must be a reasonable expectation of success. *In re Merck & Co., Inc.*, 800 F.2d 1091, 231 U.S.P.Q. 375 (Fed. Cir. 1986). Third, the prior art reference(s) must teach or suggest all of the claim features. *In re Royka*, 490 F.2d 981, 180 U.S.P.Q. 580 (C.C.P.A. 1974).

Claim 14, as presented, is to *an evaluation device configured to analyze output of at least a subset of the signal processors, the evaluation device and the at least a subset of the*

signal processors each forming a direct link to one of a central hub, a switch and a port, of a network having a star-shaped topology.

The Office Action has asserted the rationale of applying a “known” technique to a “known” device ready for improvement to yield predictable results. To rely on this rationale, the Office must articulate the following: (1) a finding that the prior art contained a “base” device (method, or product) upon which the claimed invention can be seen as an “improvement”; (2) a finding that the prior art contained a known technique that is applicable to the base device (method, or product); (3) a finding that one of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that applying the known technique would have yielded predictable results and resulted in an improved system; and (4) whatever additional findings based on the Graham factual inquiries may be necessary, in view of the facts of the case under consideration, to explain a conclusion of obviousness. M.P.E.P. § 2143. As explained below, the present rejections do not articulate the foregoing as required by the Office.

To date, the Office has not properly articulated the findings necessary to support the asserted obviousness rejections. As to item (1), the Office maintains that the system of the “Gilge” reference already contains a star network, in which the evaluation device is the central point, based on the Dictionary of Computers, Information & Telecommunications (the “Rosenberg” reference). A copy of the relevant pages is therefore respectfully requested, since the Office has a duty to provide it under M.P.E.P. § 707.05(a).

Furthermore, the reference should include a clear indication of its date of publication to establish that the reference constitutes prior art against the present application. Otherwise, it is respectfully submitted that the Office has not met its burden with respect to establishing that the definition of a star network was known at the time of the claimed subject matter. In addition, for the reasons explained below, the “Gilge” reference does not constitute a star network according to the definition assertedly provided in the “Rosenberg” reference.

To constitute a star network according to the “Rosenberg” reference, there must be a central or controlling node. However, there is nothing to indicate that the evaluation device of the “Gilge” reference is either a central node or a controlling node. In particular, the Office Action points to various functions of the evaluation device that relate to the reception, processing and transmission of data. However, these functions do not involve any apparent control of data traffic. Instead, it appears that the evaluation device passively responds to input from those components to which it is connected. Further in this regard, the nature of

the controlling is unclear from the definition provided in the “Rosenberg” reference, which does not provide any indication of what it means to be a controlling node. The evaluation device therefore does not exert the control necessary to constitute a “controlling node,” so that the “Gilge” system is not a star network, as provided for in the context of the presently claimed subject matter.

As to item (2) (as to whether the Ethernet techniques of the “Martin” reference are applicable to the “Gilge” system), the Office apparently and conveniently includes (without reason) various networking features into the “Gilge” system, such as evaluating data, balancing network traffic, recording network data, performing network error checking and correction, and adapting to increased workload from additional device. Although these features are clearly absent from the “Gilge” system, the Office conclusorily asserts that it is conventional with networks (like the “Gilge” system) to include these features. The Office also assumes that the evaluation device necessarily implements these features. As explained above, the evaluation device is not a controlling node. The mere fact that the evaluation device communicates with an external network is insufficient to conclude that the system as a whole is itself a network formed around the evaluation device, as provided for in the context of the claimed subject matter.

As to item (3), it is respectfully submitted that one of ordinary skill in the art would not have recognized a need for the networking features described above. The Office Action conclusorily asserts that the benefits of applying Ethernet techniques to the “Gilge” system would be recognized as predictable, but the asserted reasons are wholly based on hindsight. The Office has not asserted that the asserted disadvantages of the “Gilge” system (e.g., costs of paying staff to program, construct, and support appropriate unique network systems, costs to test software and hardware for reliability and costs to balance and rebalance workload) would be recognized at the time of the applied references. Instead, the Office appears to suggest that the authors of the “Gilge” reference necessarily had the foresight to create a system that would be amenable to modification in view of later realized needs.

Additionally, the Office has not explained why it would be obvious to apply the Ethernet techniques of the “Martin” reference to arrive at the specific configuration of the present application, as presented in the claims (e.g., a configuration in which the evaluation device would form a direct link to the hub/switch). The “Martin” reference does not disclose how to modify an existing system to implement a star network. For instance, the “Martin”

reference does not address the situation of substituting a central switch for an existing component, and it also does not indicate how to connect the existing component relative to the central switch after substitution is performed. Thus, the combination of the applied references would not enable one of ordinary skill in the art to arrive at the presently claimed subject matter.

Based on these reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the “Martin” reference does not cure the deficiencies of the primary “Gilge” reference, so that one skilled in the art would not be motivated to combine these references.

For at least the above reasons, claim 14, as presented, is allowable, as are its dependent claims 15 to 28, 31 and 32.

Claims 34 and 35 each provide for features substantially similar to those of claim 14 and are therefore allowable at least the same reasons. In addition, claims 34 and 35 provide for additional features not disclosed or suggested by the cited references. For example, claims 34 and 35 provide for features relating to the operation of the hub/switch/port. In addition to engaging in full duplex communication with each of the signal processors, the hub/switch/port communicates signal processor output to the evaluation device, communicates evaluation device to a second device coupled to an output connection, and communicates an input from the second device, received via the output connection, to the evaluation device. Thus, the evaluation device as presented in claims 34 and 35 is actively responsible for various types of intra-device as well as inter-device communication. Accordingly, claims 34 and 35, as presented, are allowable for these further reasons.

Claims 29, 30 and 33 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over the “Gilge” reference in view of the “Martin” reference and U.S. Patent Application Pub. No. 2004/0264493 (the “Han” reference).

Claims 29, 30 and 33 depend from claim 14 and they are therefore allowable for the same reasons, since the “Han” reference does not cure – and has not been asserted to cure – the critical deficiencies of the “Gilge” and “Martin” references as to claim 14.

Additionally, claim 33 and, respectively, claims 29 and 30, include the features in which “*the plurality of signal processors are configured to communicate with one another in full duplex mode*” and in which “*at least a subset of the plurality of signal processors is assigned a specific bandwidth.*” Although the Office conclusorily asserts that full duplex

communication and assigning of bandwidth are somehow provided by the “Han” reference, no reasons are provided as to why it would be obvious to implement these features with the “Gilge” system.

As further regards each of the obviousness rejections, it is respectfully submitted that the cases of In re Fine, *supra*, and In re Jones, 21 U.S.P.Q.2d 1941 (Fed. Cir. 1992), make plain that the Office's generalized assertions that it would have been obvious to modify or combine the references do not properly support a § 103 rejection. It is respectfully submitted that those cases make plain that the Office Actions to date reflects a subjective “obvious to try” standard, and therefore does not reflect the proper evidence to support an obviousness rejection based on the references relied upon. In particular, the Court in the case of In re Fine stated that:

The PTO has the burden under section 103 to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness. It can satisfy this burden only by showing some objective teaching in the prior art or that knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art would lead that individual to combine the relevant teachings of the references. This it has not done. . . .

Instead, the Examiner relies on hindsight in reaching his obviousness determination. . . . One cannot use hindsight reconstruction to pick and choose among isolated disclosures in the prior art to deprecate the claimed invention.

In re Fine, 5 U.S.P.Q.2d at 1598 to 1600 (citations omitted; italics in original; emphasis added). Likewise, the Court in the case of In re Jones stated that:

Before the PTO may combine the disclosures of two or more prior art references in order to establish *prima facie* obviousness, there must be some suggestion for doing so, found either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art. . . .

Conspicuously missing from this record is any evidence, other than the PTO's speculation (if it be called evidence) that one of ordinary skill . . . would have been motivated to make the modifications . . . necessary to arrive at the claimed [invention].

In re Jones, 21 U.S.P.Q.2d at 1943, 1944 (citations omitted; italics in original).

That is exactly the case here since it is believed and respectfully submitted that the Office Actions to date offer no evidence whatsoever, but only conclusory hindsight,

reconstruction and speculation, which these cases have indicated does not constitute evidence that will support a proper obviousness finding. Unsupported assertions are not evidence as to why a person having ordinary skill in the art would be motivated to modify or combine references to provide the claimed subject matter of the claims to address the problems met thereby. Accordingly, the Office must provide proper evidence of a motivation for modifying or combining the references to provide the claimed subject matter.

Also, the Federal Circuit in the case of In re Kotzab has made plain that even if a claim concerns a “technologically simple concept” — which is not the case here — there still must be some finding as to the “specific understanding or principle within the knowledge of a skilled artisan” that would motivate a person having no knowledge of the claimed subject matter to “make the combination in the manner claimed,” stating that:

In this case, the Examiner and the Board fell into the hindsight trap. The idea of a single sensor controlling multiple valves, as opposed to multiple sensors controlling multiple valves, is a technologically simple concept. With this simple concept in mind, the Patent and Trademark Office found prior art statements that in the abstract appeared to suggest the claimed limitation. But, there was no finding as to the specific understanding or principle within the knowledge of a skilled artisan that would have motivated one with no knowledge of Kotzab's invention to make the combination in the manner claimed. In light of our holding of the absence of a motivation to combine the teachings in Evans, we conclude that the Board did not make out a proper *prima facie* case of obviousness in rejecting [the] claims . . . under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) over Evans.

In re Kotzab, 55 U.S.P.Q.2d 1313, 1318 (Fed. Cir. 2000) (emphasis added). Here again, there have been no such findings to establish that the features discussed above of the rejected claims are met by the reference relied upon. As referred to above, any review of the reference, whether taken alone or combined, makes plain that the reference simply does not describe the features discussed above of the rejected claims.

Thus, the proper evidence of obviousness must show why there is a suggestion as to the reference so as to provide the subject matter of the claimed subject matter and its benefits.

In short, there is no evidence that the reference relied upon, whether taken alone or otherwise, would provide the features of the claims discussed above. It is therefore respectfully submitted that the claims are allowable for these reasons.

As still further regards all of the obviousness rejections of the claims, it is respectfully submitted that a proper *prima facie* case has not been made in the present case for

obviousness, since the Office Actions to date never made any findings, such as, for example, regarding in any way whatsoever what a person having ordinary skill in the art would have been at the time the claimed subject matter of the present application was made. (See In re Rouffet, 47 U.S.P.Q.2d 1453, 1455 (Fed. Cir. 1998) (the “factual predicates underlying” a *prima facie* “obviousness determination include the scope and content of the prior art, the differences between the prior art and the claimed invention, and the level of ordinary skill in the art”)). It is respectfully submitted that the proper test for showing obviousness is what the “combined teachings, knowledge of one of ordinary skill in the art, and the nature of the problem to be solved as a whole would have suggested to those of ordinary skill in the art”, and that the Patent Office must provide particular findings in this regard — the evidence for which does not include “broad conclusory statements standing alone”. (See In re Kotzab, 55 U.S.P.Q. 2d 1313, 1317 (Fed. Cir. 2000) (citing *In re Dembiczak*, 50 U.S.P.Q.2d 1614, 1618 (Fed. Cir. 1999) (obviousness rejections reversed where no findings were made “concerning the identification of the relevant art”, the “level of ordinary skill in the art” or “the nature of the problem to be solved”))). It is respectfully submitted that there has been no such showings by the Office Actions to date or by the Advisory Action.

In fact, the present lack of any of the required factual findings forces both Appellants and any Appeals Board to resort to unwarranted speculation to ascertain exactly what facts underly the present obviousness rejections. The law mandates that the allocation of the proof burdens requires that the Patent Office provide the factual basis for rejecting a patent application under 35 U.S.C. § 103. (See In re Piasecki, 745 F.2d 1468, 1472, 223 U.S.P.Q. 785, 788 (Fed. Cir. 1984) (citing *In re Warner*, 379 F.2d 1011, 1016, 154 U.S.P.Q. 173, 177 (C.C.P.A. 1967))). In short, the Examiner bears the initial burden of presenting a proper *prima facie* unpatentability case — which has not been met in the present case. (See In re Oetiker, 977 F.2d 1443, 1445, 24, U.S.P.Q.2d 1443, 1444 (Fed. Cir. 1992)).

In sum, claims 14 to 35 are allowable.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that all of presently pending claims 14 to 35 are allowable. It is therefore respectfully requested that the rejections (and any objections) be withdrawn. Since all issues raised by the Examiner have been addressed, an early and favorable action on the merits is respectfully requested.

Dated: _____

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Respectfully submitted,

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